



Trumpet Luminary **RON MILES** Releases **QUIVER** (Enja/Yellowbird), October 9, 2012

Featuring **BILL FRISELL** and **BRIAN BLADE**

Master trumpeter **Ron Miles** injects his radiant, lyrical tone directly into the lifeblood of American music on his latest release, *Quiver*. A compelling, inviting trio date with guitarist **Bill Frisell** and drummer **Brian Blade**, *Quiver* combines the singing melodicism of American folk musics, the heightened communication of the most progressive jazz forms, and an entrancing, airy openness. The album finds three genre-defying musical masters at their creative best, lacing easy camaraderie with virtuosic interaction.

"I conceived it so that there was a lot of space in the music," Miles told writer and session annotator Chip Stern, "which just makes it a perfect vehicle for Brian and Bill, who are so purposeful in the way they think through a phrase with all of the silences intact and create all of this motion and energy without any wasted gestures or by playing a whole bunch of notes."

Miles is solidly grounded in the jazz tradition yet open to all manner of ethnic, popular and classical sources - let alone down-home American folk. Just try not to be intoxicated by the joyous hoedowns and hosannas of "Just Married," in which country music and blues share a glorious two-step. Miles' keen sense of those qualities which elevate the joy and drama of the very earliest jazz recordings enlivens the trio's forays into roots elements of the music as well as its more modern iterations on *Quiver*. On "Guest Of Honor," Miles infuses post-modern nods towards Scott Joplin with personal and political feeling.

"Honor is my son's name," Miles explains. "I always wanted to do something syncopated in a ragtime manner, and it got me thinking about Scott Joplin and the opera which preceded 'Treemonisha,' which was 'A Guest Of Honor.' We don't actually know what the music sounds like, because it was never sent to the copyright office. Apparently 'A Guest Of Honor' referenced the story of how Booker T. Washington was invited to the White House by Teddy Roosevelt, with all the controversy that subsequently ensued. And so while we tend to think of Joplin writing upbeat music such as "Maple Leaf Rag," here he was writing political operas as far back as 1903."

On Miles' more modernist conceptions, from the jagged hesitations and stutter steps of "Bruise" to the Ornettish exposition of "Rudy Go Round," the composer's love of extended forms, asymmetrical abstractions, and dramatic syncopated dances between dissonant and consonant elements rings just as true as his forays into the music's earliest roots - as do the torchy tenderness and lyric splendor of his balladic interpretations, such as "Days Of Wine And Roses" and "Queen B."

The music on *Quiver* expands brilliantly on the technical and spiritual foundations this Denver-based, 49-year-old musical trailblazer has crafted for himself since graduating from the Manhattan School of Music in 1986. The album is a logical evolution of Heaven, his deceptively quiescent 2002 duet recital with Frisell. "If we were going to add a third person," Miles says, "we both agreed it should be Brian more than anyone else because he is one of the most musical drummers on the scene." In fact, it's hard to imagine many other drummers approaching this music with both the pianistic elegance and intellectual

discretion to lay back and allow the action to come to him - never truncating the conversation with some nervous compulsion to fill every inch of space with excitement.

Witness how Blade sets the table for the old-timey jazz feeling of Miles' brilliant re-working of that Roaring Twenties chestnut "There Ain't No Sweet Man Worth The Salt of My Tears" with some of the most beautifully inflected mallet phrases this side of Big Sid Catlett and Elvin Jones, even as Frisell gets up on his Charlie Christian soap-box, while Miles seemingly channels the spirit of Lester Bowie in his solo passages.

In short, on *Quiver* Miles brings the history of jazz up to date by neither disregarding its history or by remaining enslaved to it, instead giving an extremely personal account of the divergent branches of the music's immeasurably rich family tree.

"Listening to composers the likes of Scott Joplin, James Reese Europe, Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington on one hand, and improvisers such as Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry on the other, is both humbling and inspiring," Miles concludes. "And as much as anything, after a lifetime's study, what this music has given me is a sense of the enormity of spirituality; of being American, of being African-American; of how privileged I am to walk that path and how much work I still have to do. There are so many people who've inhabited this music: living it, writing it, playing it, listening to it. So you just find a way to be you in it, to find your way in it. That's what we're trying to do on *Quiver*."

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*Parts of this press release were culled from write Chip Stern's liner notes to Quiver.
Please refer to his original essay for a more complete narrative of this recording.*

**For more information on Ron Miles contact Matt Merewitz at
Fully Altered Media: (347) 384-2839 or matt@fullyaltered.com**